2: Courlander B-6 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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From Colonel Déro to Private Diplaro,
They marched with fanfare, a great army of foot soldiers!
He thought that he was king!
He thought that he was king!
He thought that he was king!
The Spaniards chased him, he ran like a dog after fresh carrion!

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Forty-five years later, in 1888, there was a big political rally in Port-au-Prince. The two presidential candidates were General Séide Télémaque and Déus Légitime. Their supporters clashed near the palace, and Télémaque was killed in an exchange of gunfire. Légitime naturally was accused of having murdered his rival, though his supporters would not believe that he had committed such a crime. Evidence for a trial was entirely lacking, and Déus Légitime became president. But feeling ran high, and the followers of Télémaque began to sing:

* [533]
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Écoutez chers amis l'histoire de Légitime!
Assassin de Séide, et lui est président!
Écoutez bien l'histoire, le gens du nord marchaient
Sur Port-au-Prince un fois pou' vengé la mort de Séide!
Allez au diable, bandit Déus!
Échappez vous, ingrat Déus!
Si vous perdre le temps, Déus,
Florvil vous feura fusillé!

Listen my friends to the story of Légitime!
Assassin of Séide, and he is President!
Listen well to the story, the people of the north will march
On Port-au-Prince one day to avenge the death of Séide!
Go to the devil, bandit Déus!
Escape, ingrate Déus!
If you lose time, Déus,
Florvil will have you shot!

[669]

Légitime had this possibility clearly in his mind. And the next year, when Florvil Gélin Hippolyte marched from the north with an army of *cacos* (peasant troops who hired out to political aspirants), Légitime hurriedly boarded a steamer in the harbor and sailed for Jamaica. Séide Télémaque was considered avenged, as the army bugles still bear witness. For now when the bugle plays reveille it is supposed to be saying:

* [539]

Séide Télémaque, Légitime has fled!
Séide Télémaque, Légitime has fled!

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The new President, Florvil Hippolyte, died in office in 1896. J. N. Leger, a Haitian historian, tells soberly of Hippolyte's end in the following words.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Hait! SV3

533 539 643 named in the song has been dead for years does not seem to matter very much:

Mènè'm allé oh parleur!	Take me to the parlor!
Mènè'm allé!	Take me!
Mènè'm allé!	Take me!
Mènè'm allé oh parleur Borno!	Take me to Borno's parlor!
Mènè'm allé oh! [Ex. 120]	Take me, oh!

533 539 625 Sometimes the challenge is directed to a more lowly level of authority, such as the gendarme:

Gendarme, mènè'm nan bureau!
Rwo, gendarme oh! [Ex. 121]

Gendarme, take me to the police station!
Rwo, gendarme, oh!

159 683 579 [183] [626] Haitians are notable for their restraint from physical violence. During holiday celebrations it is not uncommon to see men who have drunk enough tafia to make them act up. Some of them may even be morose and bellicose. But the disturbances of the peace more often than not are verbal. So long as the first blow is not struck, the social pressures against violence operate effectively. But physical assault against an individual—a push, a blow, a slap—is an affront to personal dignity which relieves the victim of the social restraints and gives him the right to bodily revenge. I have seen waterfront rows, fierce and vocal, in which no one but the participants showed much interest. But should one man shove or strike another, the spectators would immediately interfere, for that single physical contact would have removed the barriers to the worst violence. Sometimes at carnival time a man assumes the guise of belligerence. Such a bully may roll up one trouser leg to indicate he is challenging all and sundry to a fight. Usually, passers-by move aside good-naturedly when he approaches. He is not taken seriously; but neither is he challenged, except by another man in the same frame of mind. When two men with rolled trouser legs meet, there may be a verbal encounter, possibly from opposite sides of the street, to the general entertainment of the bystanders. It is usually a serio-comic affair. Some of the folk songs memorialize occasions on which a man has publicly spoiled for a fight, real or imaginary. This song comments briefly on a man named Çalira, who looked for trouble:

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Woy woy woy!
Woy woy woy!
Woy woy woy!
Çac bien arrangé corps yo!
Mène en bataille là!

2: Courlander B-6 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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Çalira Çalira ça!
Mène en bataille là!
Ça qui fin arrangé corps yo!
Mène en bataille là! [Ex. 122]

Woy woy woy!
Woy woy woy!
Woy woy woy!
Those who can't fight, take care of yourselves!
Take me into the battle!
Çalira, this Çalira!
Take me into the battle!
Those who are delicate, take care of yourselves!
Take me into the battle!

Another battle cry in song goes:

C'est nou même, c'est nou même!
C'est nou même, c'est nou même!
Pas wè'm déjà gros Nèg' rwo!
Na mainyain djab là!

It is me myself, it is me myself!
It is me myself, it is me myself!
Don't you see I am a big man, rwo?
I will hold that devil!

In the following song an aggrieved man declares he is strong as a bull, and warns his enemy to beware.

Anou mayain tè glissé nou c'est bèf oh!
Anou mayain tè glissé nou c'est bèf oh!

I'll fix you, treacherous fellow,* I am a bull, oh!
I'll fix you, treacherous fellow, I am a bull, oh!

Even a successful game of dice is the subject of bragging:

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Passé frai,
Oh passé belle,
Passé un beauté!
Passé frai,
Oh passé belle,
Passé un beauté!
Yr é soir frappé nos,
Non fai trois lasse! [Ex. 123]

More than sweet,
Oh, more than handsome,
More than a beauty!
More than sweet,
Oh, more than handsome,
More than a beauty!
Last night I played dice,
I made three aces!

* *Tì glissé*, literally "slippery earth," means a person who is treacherous.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 433 Haiti under Dessalines seemed to be flourishing, although it was less productive than under the French colonial régime. This was partly because the material damage of the wars had been too great to be quickly repaired; partly it was because many of the free Haitians had discovered ways of disappearing into the remote valleys, there to live the life of independent squatters, safe from the blows of Dessalines' overseers. Tables of exports showed that sugar production was rapidly declining, and that coffee was now becoming the principal crop of the country.[4] Many cane fields, indeed, were turning into rugged thickets, their mills and refineries falling to ruins beside the clogged irrigation ditches.

175 466 439 579 It was a bewildering "system," then, this instituted by Dessalines: intense activity of serfs on government plantations, but an increasing number of deserting squatters; foreign trade encouraged, yet run by principles of local favoritism. Even the old-fashioned practice of piracy was reëstablished, for the Emperor gave letters of marque to some of his subjects who owned ships, allowing them to pursue French and Spanish vessels as the rightful prey of an enemy country. Sometimes these Haitian corsairs even disturbed smaller English merchant ships. Finally, it was Dessalines who said to his favorites, "*Plumez la poule* [that is, the Haitian people], *mais prenez garde qu'elle ne crie pas.*"

175 439 437 Christophe, upon his accession to power in the North, completely abandoned the fantastic schemes of Dessalines for putting an end to all contact between Haitians and foreigners. Among his earliest acts were efforts to undo the economic measures of the Emperor. In his first address he proclaimed certain free ports, announcing that the flags of all nations would be respected and property protected.[5] Next he abolished the consignment system of trading, allowing all foreign traders free access to Haitian merchants. This open system did away with the need of smuggling.

175 439 648 Because Christophe was almost pathetically anxious to make a good impression upon Great Britain, he was scrupulous in living up to his promises of security of property and justice in commercial dealings—to British merchants. The United States fared ill at the King's hands, for it was a young republic which had by refusing

4. See note on this chapter, p. 320, section 4.

5. His constitution of 1807 likewise makes this promise: "The government solemnly guarantees to foreign merchants the security of their persons and property."

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

recognition to the kingdom specifically failed to pay him proper respect. Moreover he seized the property of American merchants in his kingdom to make good a sum of $123,955.19 he could not recover from a Baltimore firm.[6] Agriculture flourished in the North, but the English were not yet certain whether Haitian credit could be trusted. The demand of the traders for cash was allowed, and so with almost no risk British dealers supplied the steady demand for staple trade goods,[7] taking in return either coffee and sugar or the equivalent in cash.

Christophe was chary of publishing any specific figures on the economic life of his kingdom: we have no way, therefore, of estimating either the annual production or the annual income. One of his statesmen, Baron de Vastey, affirmed that in 1817 more than 150 ships were supplied with cargoes of coffee and sugar at the Cape alone.[8] This number is equal to that which sailed from the port during its most peaceful and prosperous periods in colonial times; one suspects the baron of exaggerating. We know, however, that Christophe was the chief merchant in his kingdom, setting his own prices and disposing of his own goods before others could sell; we know, too, that he left a large fortune in his coffers when he died.

Like Dessalines, King Henry Christophe had his pirates, and redoubtable ones. But he warned them to prey only on French ships bound for ports in Pétion's republic in the South; he did not wish his trade interfered with in the North.

The policies of Dessalines and Christophe were personal, based upon their subjective prejudices and preferences; those of Pétion were more in accord with the practice of other civilized nations of the time. They had to be, perforce, in view of the economic and political position of his republic.

Southern Haiti had never, even in colonial times, been so intensely cultivated as the North. Foreign traders were accustomed to deal at the Cape, now the capital of Christophe's dominion. while Port-au-Prince was but a secondary market. After the civil war Christophe had practically allied himself with Great Britain. If this coup were to be counterbalanced, Pétion would have to choose for allies among

6. See Ludwell L. Montague, *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938*, p. 48.

7. Christophe did not encourage his people to purchase any of the extravagantly rich manufactures of Europe, but rather to keep their wants simple.

8. Formerly Cap François, then Cap-Haitien, but under Christophe renamed in his honor Cap-Henry; it is now Cap-Haitien.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

Foreign relations, in the political sense, revolved during most of

the nineteenth century about loans and insurrections. Haiti maintained legations in those countries to which she exported most of her coffee and from which she might obtain credit. Revolutionary leaders sometimes promised as a bait for foreign assistance either tariff preferences or the cession of Môle Saint Nicolas for a naval base; if successful, they might fulfill the first promise but, because of the Monroe Doctrine and the watchful jealousy of the big powers, the Môle was never ceded. The United States had varied dealings with Haiti. Before the Civil War there was more than one movement to transplant freed slaves from this country to Haiti; after the war the United States came very near annexing Haiti; and negotiations over the cession of the Môle did not end until America acquired Guantanamo Bay, across the Windward Passage in Cuba, as a naval base to guard the entrance to the Caribbean.[1]

It was finally the combination of complicated economic affairs and political collapse which produced the Occupation of 1915. In the preceding year both France and Germany threatened to send warships to collect loans due them, and were stopped only by the outbreak of the World War. An American bank held as its subsidiary the Bank of Haiti, in which the government deposited its funds; when in 1914–15 the presidents followed each other in rapid succession, the bank on instructions from New York refused to allow the government to withdraw its funds. Haiti in retaliation threatened to seize its deposits by force, but the New York bank persuaded the United States government to send a ship to transfer the gold from Port-au-Prince to New York. There were other financial complications, particularly those relating to defaulted payments to a railroad company. What finally precipitated the Occupation, however, was anarchy. When, in July, 1915, President Sam slaughtered 168 political prisoners and was himself mobbed and murdered, the American government ordered the landing of its Marines from a warship conveniently anchored in the harbor near Port-au-Prince.[2]

From 1915 to 1934 the foreign affairs of Haiti were under the direction of the United States, whose main concern was to order the economic relations of the country in such fashion that Haiti should

1. The foreign relations of Haiti with the United States have been clearly treated in Ludwell L. Montague, *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938*.

2. One of the best accounts of the events leading up to the Occupation is that of H. P. Davis, *Black Democracy*.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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197 a language into their daily speech. What the Americans have done to English, the Haitians in general have done to Créole. It is pertinent briefly to review the early history of Créole in order to comprehend the distinctly Haitian contributions to the language.

175 Through most of the seventeenth century Caribbean waters were full of pirates and buccaneers preying upon Spanish shipping. The
• 579 effective monopoly which lordly Spain held in the preceding century over the trade of Europe with her rich Mexican and South American colonies began, in the early years of the new century, to crumble before the ingenious, speedy, and daring assaults of non-Spanish raiders. French, Dutch, and English sailors were all ready to try their hand at capturing laden Spanish ships. The rich cargoes of gold, silver, and merchandise were alluring enough to make the risk seem worth taking. And indeed the risk was not too great, for Spain's stately galleons were antiquated and cumbersome, generally no match for the flyboats[1] which had speed and much greater manageability. More and more Spanish control over the Caribbean, the Spanish Main, declined as the freebooters increased.

175 French sailors were among the most numerous and reckless of the
579 gadflies who made life miserable for the Spanish traders. Drawn from
648 the northern and northwestern provinces of France, these men had been seafarers all their lives. Harrying Spanish shipping was the most lucrative career for French sailors, and as the seventeenth century wore on their numbers in the Caribbean increased. By 1660 they had established a raiding base on La Tortue, an island off the northern coast of Haiti, where they developed a characteristic way of life —economic, political, and social—between raids.[2] Their presence near Haiti gave France a claim, in the Treaty of Ryswick (1697), to the western part of the island. For the next hundred years this region was to be known as Saint-Domingue.

175 Créole was born of buccaneering. In the seventeenth century the
579 French of Île-de-France had not yet supplanted the dialects of the
197 French districts; the buccaneers consequently spoke their native speech, and since Norman sailors far outnumbered the others

[175] 1. Origin of "flibustier," "filibuster," and "freebooter."
[192] 2. It was here that they came to be called "buccaneers." They raided the relatively deserted main island of Haiti (then still under Spanish control) for cattle roaming wild. These cattle they cooked over an open fire, with a certain kind of wood; the process was called "boucanning," and they themselves "boucaniers." They imported wives from the seaport towns of Normandy, and families began to be raised on La Tortue.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Norman French became the dominant tongue of the French buccaneers. Words were naturally added from the patois of the neighboring French provinces of Picardy, Brittany, and Anjou, but Norman remained the matrix.[3] With La Tortue as their home base, the buccaneers roamed the Caribbean, coming into constant contact with other people—contact which left its mark, as meetings generally do, upon the speech of the travelers.

There were still Indians left in some of the islands, and Indians outnumbered Spaniards on the mainland. From these aborigines Créole borrowed many individual words, these being generally the names of things—flora and fauna, food, objects of daily life more or less common throughout the Caribbean world.[4] The grammatical contributions of the Indians were apparently only an emphasis upon tendencies already present in Norman French, such as that of keeping the verb form constant while making other words in the sentence do the work of indicating past, present, or future, continuous or completed action, and the like.

Engaged in buccaneering with the French were hundreds of English privateers. Often English and French raided in partnership; for many years both groups shared La Tortue. This contact left a heavy mark upon Créole—a congenial one, indeed, for Norman French had been for more than four centuries the official language of England. Now in the seventeenth century English was giving back to Norman many words in exchange for the ones it had taken.[5] More important than its verbal gift, however, was the influence it exerted toward a simple syntax. As compared with French forms,

3. An outstanding linguist, John Paine, in *Philologie créole*, p. 1, estimates that three out of four words in Créole are Norman.

4. A very few of these Indian words have become familiar in French, and still fewer in English; but one finds many of them, in one form or another, in the whole Caribbean basin. Examples are:

agouti, a small rodent	*hamac*, hammock
ajoupa, a dish whose base is corn	*ouragan*, hurricane
caiman, alligator	*roucoumier*, a very hard wood
canoe, a large lined	*simpolier*, another hard wood
avocat, the avocado pear	*wabouya*, small lined
calebasse, calabash	*barbacoa*, barbecue
carambole, a green prickly fruit	*cassave*, a starch plant
gouyave, guava	*lambi*, a mollusk or conch
guano, palm	*tuna-tuna*, a purple of tuneaux

5. Henry Mitzy, *Glossaire comparatif Anglo-Normand* (Caen, 1888), points out that the modern Norman dialect contains more than 3,000 words common to English and Norman, but not recognized in official French.